

Frequently Asked Questions

Arizona's Highly Qualified Teacher Evaluation and HOUSSE Rubric

1. Who should complete the forms?

Core academic subject teachers are to complete the evaluation annually, and if necessary, the HOUSSE rubric, due to changes in certification status and/or teaching assignment, college/workshop credits earned, etc. Since building administrators must submit an annual Verification of Compliance on their highly qualified staff, they need updated forms to affirm the verification they are required to send to the district by NCLB law.

2. Which subjects are considered the core academic subjects?

No Child Left Behind defines “core academic subjects” to include English, reading or language arts, math, science (including Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physics) foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts (Visual Arts and Music), history and geography.

3. What if a teacher is teaching in more than one content area at the middle or high school level?

Teachers must complete the form(s) for **each** core academic content area which they are **currently** teaching.

4. Are there teachers who do not have to meet the “highly qualified” standards by completing the rubric?

Yes. The rubric must only be completed by teachers in core academic areas as defined by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. For example, PE and performing arts teachers **do not** have to complete the rubric. However, music and visual arts teachers **do** have to complete the rubric.

5. Will teachers who are certified but not currently teaching in Arizona be eligible to use these forms?

Teachers who are Arizona certified but not currently teaching will be eligible to use the forms upon accepting a teaching position within an Arizona district or charter school setting.

6. How do I become highly qualified if I am a new teacher?

The law requires that new teachers hold a bachelor's degree, have full state certification and demonstrate subject-matter competency. The teacher can do this by passing a rigorous subject test in each of the academic subjects he or she teaches. A middle or high school teacher may demonstrate subject-matter competency by having successfully completed, in each of the core academic subjects he or she teaches, an academic major, a graduate degree, coursework equivalent to an undergraduate academic major (24 hours in AZ), or advanced certification or credentialing. New elementary school teachers must demonstrate the required competency by passing a state-approved test.

7. How do I become highly qualified if I am an experienced teacher?

Many experienced teachers have already met the highly qualified teacher requirements. They must have a bachelor's degree and full state certification (no emergency certificates). For the third requirement, there are multiple ways for experienced teachers to demonstrate that they have sufficient content knowledge. Teachers may opt for taking the state subject-matter test or demonstrate competency through the state-developed high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation, or HOUSSE Rubric. In addition, middle and high school teachers may demonstrate competency through a major (or its equivalent), or through advanced certification or credentials in the subject they teach.

8. Are rural teachers permitted more time to meet highly qualified requirements?

The U.S. Department of Education has recognized that often, teachers in rural areas are required to teach more than one academic subject due to teacher shortages. Under the new policy for rural flexibility, teachers in eligible rural districts who are highly qualified in one core academic area have until the end of school year 2006-07 to meet highly qualified requirements in the additional core subjects they may teach. Teachers must receive professional development and intense supervision or structured mentoring to become highly qualified in the additional subjects. New teachers in eligible rural districts must be highly qualified in one subject at the time of hire and three (3) years from that time to meet the requirements in other subjects they teach.

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9. Does the criterion for “highly qualified” apply to private schools?

The criteria for the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the highly qualified professional apply only to district and charter schools; however, private school teachers serving Title I students in a Title I program must meet the highly qualified requirements.

10. What is considered to be a “valid state teaching certificate” or full state certification in Arizona?

A “valid teaching certificate” includes the **intern**, **provisional** and **standard** certificates. It **does not** include the emergency certificate.

11. Would an Elementary Education K-8 certificate suffice for being certified and highly qualified when one is teaching a single subject for middle school grades?

State Board Rule R7-2-607 states that teachers in grades 7 through 12 whose primary assignment is in an academic subject area are required pursuant to R7-2-302 to demonstrate proficiency by passing the appropriate subject area portion of the Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessment (AEPA). The subject areas of demonstrated proficiency shall be specified on the certificate. If a proficiency assessment is not offered in a subject area, an approved area shall consist of a minimum of 24 semester hours of courses in the subject. The teacher would also need to meet a content area requirement (#3 on the Highly Qualified Evaluation), with experienced teachers having the option of using the HOUSSE Rubric to meet highly qualified (not state certification) requirements.

12. If a teacher’s certification is expiring this school year, will the renewal of this certificate be affected by the guidelines for “highly qualified” under the *No Child Left Behind Act*?

No, the “highly qualified” criterion is separate from the certification process. Therefore, renewing a teaching certificate will not be affected. However, the highly qualified standards for public school (non-charter) teachers requires that a teacher has a valid state certification, so teachers should keep their certification(s) valid to be able to attest to that fact.

13. May teachers teach with an emergency certificate or temporary permit and still be considered highly qualified?

No. New teachers must meet their state’s definition of highly qualified in the subjects they are teaching at the time of hire, and full state certification is one of these requirements. Experienced teachers teaching under an emergency certificate or temporary permit have until the end of the 2005–06 school year to earn full state certification. Teachers who are part of an alternative certification program and already have a bachelor’s degree and demonstrated subject-matter competency (passing AEPA score) meet the definition of highly qualified, under the condition that they will complete certain certification requirements in three years or less.

14. When can a teacher in an alternative route to certification/licensure program be considered “highly qualified”?

Teachers who are not yet fully certified may be considered to meet the certification requirements in the NCLB definition of a highly qualified teacher if they are participating in an alternative route to certification program under which they: (1) receive high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction before and while teaching; (2) participate in a program of intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support for teachers, or a teacher mentoring program; (3) assume functions as a teacher only for a specified period of time not to exceed three years; and (4) demonstrate satisfactory progress toward full certification as prescribed by the State.

15. How does *National Board Certification* affect becoming “highly qualified”?

If a teacher holds *National Board Certification* in the content area in which he/she is teaching, the teacher is highly qualified. However, if the teacher completed the process for *National Board Certification* in the content area but has yet to earn certification, he/she is then eligible to gain points under Column 3 of the rubric for “completed assessments for *National Board Certification (NBC)*”.

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16. Do extra-curricular activities, such as a science trip to Catalina Island or sponsoring the school's science club, count for points on the rubric?

Extra-curricular activities in the content area **do count** under the rubric heading of "Service".

17. Who decides whether or not an activity is worth points?

The building administrator determines if an activity is worth points. For example, a brief (10-15 minute) professional development activity held at the end of a faculty meeting **would not** be worth points. Remember, all professional activities **must** be in the content area in which the teacher is currently teaching and should meet the requirements of being high quality professional development as defined in *NCLB* Section 9101 (34). A condensed version of the definition states that high quality professional development activities are sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused; are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences; based on scientifically based research; aligned to state standards, etc.

18. What are the requirements for Special Education (SPED) teachers?

Very similar to those for general education teachers, the requirements state that SPED teachers must have a Bachelor's Degree; **and** full state certification (intern, provisional or standard) as a SPED teacher to be highly qualified. For those SPED teachers of record in core academic subject areas, there are additional requirements to meet core academic highly qualified standards as other K-12 teachers do, by taking the relevant AEPA for the subject area or earning 100 points on the AZ HOUSSE Rubric. Middle – high school teachers may also meet requirements by having 24 credit hours, or National Board Certification in the subject area.

19. What activities may special education teachers carry out if they are not highly qualified in the core academic content areas being taught?

Special education teachers often carry out activities that would not, by themselves, require them to be highly qualified in a particular subject. Special educators do not have to demonstrate subject-matter competency in core academic subjects if they do not directly instruct students in those subjects, or if their role is limited to providing highly qualified teachers with consultation on the adaptation of curricula, the use of behavioral supports and interventions, or the selection of appropriate accommodations. In addition, they do not need to meet highly qualified requirements in a subject area if they assist students with study or organizational skills and reinforce instruction that the child has already received from a teacher who is highly qualified in that core subject.

20. Can English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) teachers demonstrate subject-matter competency in the subjects they teach through an advanced certificate or degree in ESL?

No Child Left Behind requires that ESL teachers of record demonstrate subject-matter competency in the core subjects they teach. For example, a teacher who teaches math using ESL methodologies would need to demonstrate subject-matter competency in math. A teacher who uses ESL methodologies to teach parts of the general elementary curriculum to fourth-graders must demonstrate competency as an elementary teacher.

21. *No Child Left Behind* does not list biology, chemistry and physics in the list of core academic subjects. Does the law require teachers who teach science to demonstrate competency in each discrete science, or as a general category?

While the list of core academic subjects in the law does not break out the sciences, states must consider their current teacher certification standards to determine what is an appropriate demonstration of subject-matter competency. Since Arizona currently requires subject-specific certification in the discrete fields of science, teachers must demonstrate competency in each discrete field to be highly qualified.

22. What should teachers submit to the Arizona Department of Education to demonstrate "highly qualified" status?

Nothing. Teachers will submit their completed forms to their building administrator who will sign off indicating that the individual teacher has met the criteria for "highly qualified". The building administrator will then maintain a copy of the evaluation and rubric in the school office.